

Testimony of Magnet School Student, Andrew Strudwick
Opposing Governor's non funding of magnet schools
Appropriations Public Hearing Committee
Senator Catherine Osten
Senator Paul Formica
State Representative Toni Walker
February 21, 2017

Good evening, my name is Andrew Strudwick. I am a junior at the CREC Metropolitan Learning Center for Global Citizenship. On behalf of my family and approximately 12,000 students in CREC magnet schools, I want to ask you to please support **continued** funding at current levels for my magnet school for the students and families who chose this amazing opportunity. There has been no increase in six years!!!

I have been in magnet schools since PreK so maybe I am not the best example of comparing my experience in a magnet school versus a neighborhood or other types of schools but all I can do is tell you my story. I was diagnosed with ADHD in fourth grade so school has not been easy for me and my family. ADHD is NOT what defines me because my mom, my teachers and my support team and I will not allow it! I have family members and friends in other schools who have similar or worst challenges than I do and the stories I hear are scary. I have to focus extra hard in all my classes but I cannot imagine not having the safe environment I currently have available. I have a support team along with my set plan that all my teachers are aware of and support. The academic support, study time and resources available at my school are something that I know I need. As my mom says, "You are blessed to have this kind of support because other kids do not".

Another very important part of my story are the long lasting friendships I have who are all from different backgrounds. Some are wealthy, middle class and some do not have a lot of money but we don't see or know who is in what situation and I personally don't care. I care that I have good friends who love basketball and video games like I do. We all laugh, joke and complain about school and our parents in the same way. The color of our skin or how much money we have doesn't matter as we all still have the same teenage problems. I think what makes my school special is the safe environment, committed teachers and many things available for students to do.

From what my mom tells me the Governor is not funding magnet schools equally and that the cuts will impact all the magnet schools. I really do not understand that because I thought the one person who has the power like the Governor, would know that providing a meaningful education to all children like myself is a no brainer. Why would he NOT fund my school but give money to another type of school? Is my education less important? Why not give the same amount of money to all schools? If they misuse it then you take it away! It's like getting an allowance but you have to earn it. If you don't you don't get it. Why can't it be that simple?

I respectfully ask you as the elected officials for my community to please keep the State of Connecticut's promise to children and their families. Meaningful education can only happen if **all** children have **equal access** to **all** schools - this includes magnet schools. Invest in my future and in the future of **all** children – regardless of backgrounds and zip codes and I promise you our world will be better for it. Thank you!